BASIN BRIEFINGS

Vol. 1, No. 3 Copper Basin Mining District March 2002

Technical Assistance Plan Grant Awarded

Glenn Springs Holdings awarded a $50,000 technical assistance plan grant to the Ducktown Basin Museum. The Museum Board is using the funds to hire an independent technical advisor who has the educational background and work experience to help the local community evaluate documents and plans for cleanup activities at the Copper Basin site. The Museum Board has chosen Dr. Charles Ferst of Strata Environmental in Knoxville as the group's technical advisor.

Ken Rush, a point of contact for the Basin Museum Board, indicated that the Board plans to share site information from Dr. Ferst's work with the community, as that information becomes available. EPA, TDEC, and Glenn Springs Holdings personnel also are available to Dr. Ferst and Board members to answer questions and provide support, such as sharing site documents.

Information Repository Opens

The Copper Basin site information repository is open and available to community members who would like to review documents and related information about the investigation and cleanup activities underway at the Copper Basin site. The repository is located at the Polk County/Copper Basin Chamber of Commerce office on Main Street in Ducktown. Only final documents will be placed in the repository.

Documents in the repository are for general community use and are managed in the same way as documents in the reference section of a library. In other words, repository documents may be read or copied at the repository, but they are not

available to be checked out of the repository. Repository hours are from 9 to 4 Monday through Friday. For more information, please contact Diane Barrett, EPA community involvement coordinator, at 1-800-435-9233.

Community Involvement Plan Complete

During the past year, the Copper Basin community involvement partnership interviewed community members about the investigation and cleanup activities planned for the Copper Basin site and how the community would like to be kept informed about these activities. Using information collected during the interviews, the partnership developed a community involvement plan for the Copper Basin site. The plan is available for community review at the site information repository and on the EPA web page at www.epa.gov/region4/waste/copper under Site Documents.

Copper Basin Site Video to be Key Part of Site Education Program

The partnership is putting together a site education program to help keep community members informed about site activities. As a part of this effort, the partnership is preparing a video to introduce interested viewers to the Copper Basin site and the work underway to clean up and restore the site area. Plans for the video include highlighting the area's mining history, the products that were sold at home and abroad, the environmental effects of mining, and what is being done today to clean up and restore the area. The partnership expects to complete the video this year and looks forward to sharing it with school and community groups.

Overview of Copper Basin Site Activities

LOWER NORTH POTATO CREEK WATERSHED*

PCB Materials Removed from North Potato Creek Area

- When Tennessee Chemical Company went bankrupt in April 1989, PCB electrical devices were abandoned and left in place in the lower North Potato Creek area. In early 2001, Glenn Springs Holdings, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reached agreement to determine the exact location of these PCB electrical devices and associated materials.
- After locating the PCB devices, plans were made to dispose of these items properly. PCB devices in the North Potato Creek watershed were inventoried during 2001, and TDEC and EPA approved plans for sampling, collecting and disposing of these devices and associated materials.
- In October 2001, eight trailer and tank truck loads of PCB-contaminated devices, transformers, contaminated oils, non-contaminated oils, breaker cabinets, switch gear cabinets, etc., were removed from the Basin area. After removal, the devices were cleaned of all contaminants and recycled (by smelting) to turn them into a usable product. The oils were recycled to produce energy. A small amount of material that could not be recycled, such as fiberglass, was placed in an approved landfill.
- Soil sampling data collected during the removal will be evaluated to determine whether any additional cleanup is required.

North Potato Creek Water Quality to be Restored

- In early 2001, Glenn Springs Holdings, TDEC and EPA signed agreements to clean up the lower portion of the North Potato Creek watershed, which has been degraded by 150 years of mining in the area. The long-term objective is to restore the water quality of lower North Potato Creek to support aquatic life at the same level as in upstream reaches of North Potato Creek that are unaffected by mining and related activities.
- EPA approved a work plan in July 2001 submitted by Glenn Springs Holdings for the engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) to identify treatment options for lower North Potato Creek. Over the past 6 months, Glenn Springs Holdings has been implementing the work plan by gathering data from soil, surface water, sediment, and ground water samples to help determine which treatment options are appropriate for lower North Potato Creek.
- While long-term restoration of the North Potato Creek watershed is underway, the water in lower North Potato Creek will be treated to remove contaminants before entering the Ocoee River.

DAVIS MILL CREEK WATERSHED* AREA

Lower Davis Mill Creek Area

- In fall 2001, EPA completed the fieldwork for a sampling investigation of the lower Davis Mill Creek area. Field activities included taking samples of water and sediments from the creek, springs and seeps, and materials from the stream banks. This analytical data will assist EPA in determining appropriate actions to take in the lower Davis Mill Creek area.
- EPA continues to collect water samples and measure water flow in different parts of the Davis Mill Creek watershed. These activities provide information about the condition of the streams and the volume of water flowing from the watershed.
- A three-dimensional model of the underground mine workings is in the final stages of development. This model will be used to assess mine collapse potential and other safety concerns in the Davis Mill Creek watershed.
- EPA is completing a waste inventory of the industrial areas surrounding the Cantrell Flats Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Copperhill acid plant. Inventory results will identify the types and amounts of wastes in these areas. At present, EPA considers these areas contained, because surface storm water runoff is captured and treated at the Cantrell Flats Wastewater Treatment Plant.

*** Watershed refers to the land that produces storm water runoff and contains streams that run into a specific creek or river.**

Cantrell Flats Wastewater Treatment Plant

- EPA approved a work plan in summer 2001 for a "time-critical removal action" for the Davis Mill Creek watershed. This action includes diverting water from Belltown Creek and Gypsum Pond directly into the Ocoee River, and also includes refurbishment of the Cantrell Flats Wastewater Treatment Plant. Glenn Springs Holdings is performing this work under EPA oversight.
- During the past 6 months, Glenn Springs Holdings began a study of the Belltown Creek/Gypsum Pond diversion. As part of the study, Glenn Springs Holdings is collecting data to determine the size of the diversion/conveyance system. Glenn Springs Holdings also gathered data about conditions at the Cantrell Flats Wastewater Treatment Plant, assessed this information, and made recommendations for refurbishment.

OCOEE RIVER

- EPA made an observational visit to the Ocoee River in summer 2001 to gather information for planning future investigation activities. At present, EPA is preparing a draft Project Management Plan, which presents a strategy for the Ocoee investigation. The final plan will be completed in spring 2002 and will be available to the public on EPA's web site and at the site information repository in Ducktown.
- During the last week of February, EPA collected water and sediment samples from the Ocoee River and its reservoirs. Investigations at other mine sites show the quality of water in the sediments is an important factor in the overall quality of water in a river and its reservoirs. EPA planned this study on the Ocoee to assess the quality of sediments and the water near the sediments before TVA raises reservoir levels this spring.

Review of available Ocoee River water quality data does NOT indicate a need for concern about human health effects resulting from exposure through recreational activities, such as rafting, on the Ocoee River. Although EPA's investigation will continue to evaluate human health risks, ecological effects are expected to be the focus in the Ocoee River.

Contact Information
For more information, please contact any of the following parties:

Diane Barrett
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Toll-free 1(800) 435-9233

Suzanne Wilkes
Tennessee Dept. of Environment & Conservation
(615) 532-0925

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Glenn Springs Holdings, Inc.
(423) 496-7900

On-Line Sources of Information:

www.epa.gov/region4/waste/copper www.glennsprings-copperbasinproject.com www.state.tn.us/environment

Community members are welcome to leave a message or questions about the site on the Copper Basin site hotline number: (423) 496-4636